

Forests and Related Resources.

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The official link for this solicitation is: http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/rfas/sbir_rfa.html

Agency:
Department of Agriculture

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Description:

The Forests and Related Resources topic area aims to address the health, diversity and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations through the development of environmentally sound approaches to increase productivity of forest lands and develop value-added materials derived from woody resources. New technologies are needed to enhance the protection of the Nation's forested lands and forest resources and help to ensure the continued existence of healthy and productive forest ecosystems. Proposals focused on sustainable bioenergy and development of value-added biofuels from woody biomass, and on the influence of climate change on forest health and productivity are strongly encouraged. Proposals are also encouraged that utilize nanotechnology in their approach to developing new wood-based products or that utilize wood-based nano-materials are encouraged.

To meet the identified needs in forestry and wood utilization, the program's long-term goals (10 years) are to achieve increased utilization of woody resources for value-added products from wood; healthy and sustainable forest ecosystems with reduced impact from wildfires; healthier forest ecosystems where the impact of pathogens and insects can be minimized; sustainable harvesting of woody resources with reduced ecological impact; and improved growth and yield of major forest species that will lead to more efficient use of forested lands.

FY 2012 Research Priorities:

Examples of appropriate subtopics for research applications from small businesses include, but are not limited to the following:

1. **Growth and Yield** - Improving growing stock, tissue culture, genetic manipulation or vegetative reproduction of forest trees, and other means of increasing the regenerative abilities of forests; developing systems to increase the survival of newly planted trees through mechanical, physical or chemical means that are environmentally safe; reducing the adverse impact of pathogens and insects by developing better methods to monitor infestations and improved control strategies for combating insects and pathogens that attack important woody species.
2. **Increasing the Utility of Forest-Grown Material** - Research to improve lumber yield or other means of increasing the volume and worth of wood from individual trees; utilizing a greater percentage of the tree through improved or new techniques of veneering or comminution, for the production of new or improved reconstituted products; developing better methods for manufacturing wood products and testing wood products for performance and durability; and developing improved methods for the production of paper.
3. **Reducing Ecological Damage by Forest Operations** - Research to reduce soil erosion, compaction or other alterations caused by harvesting and/or other forest operations, and provide for the economic recovery of resources from forests while raising potential productivity and reducing impacts to the ecological structure of the area of operation.
4. **Urban forestry** - Research to promote the growth of forested land in urban areas, to address problems of forest fragmentation, the introduction of invasive species, and the impact of urban forested land on air and water quality.
5. **Climate Change** - Research to address the issue of ecosystem adaptation to climate change, ways to enhance carbon sequestration, development of decision support tools for forest managers and markets for forest ecosystem services.
6. **Developing Technology that Facilitates the Control of Wildfires on Forest Lands** - Research that provides systems for detecting and managing wildfires; systems for reducing fuel loads in forests; tools and equipment for improving the efficacy and safety of fire fighters on the ground and in the air; and communication and navigation systems for improving the coordination of fire management activities.
7. **Sustainable Bioenergy and Development of Value-Added Products From Forest Resources** - Research for development of improved methods for the conversion of forest biomass into ethanol, other biofuels and specialty chemicals, and development of new wood-based composite materials.

Other Key Information

- **ALL ATTACHMENTS MUST BE SUBMITTED IN THE PORTABLE DOCUMENT FORMAT (PDF).**
- All Phase I applications should give the reviewing community a brief vision of where the PD expects the project to be at the end of Phase II (entering Phase III commercialization).
- Applications exceeding the budget limitation or exceeding the page limit or not meeting the formatting requirements will be excluded from NIFA review.
- The applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the National Program Leader regarding the suitability of research topics.
- Applications that deal with the development of biofuels derived from non-woody agricultural crops should be submitted under topic area 8.8 Biofuels and Biobased Products.